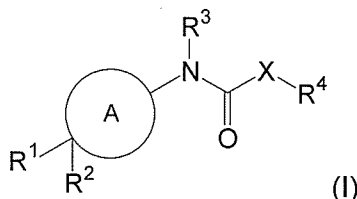
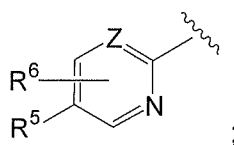


Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A compound of the formula (I):



wherein R¹ represents



~~R⁵ represents a hydroxy group or an alkylsulfonylamino group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms;~~

~~R⁶ represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, or an alkyl group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, an alkenyl group having from 2 to 6 carbon atoms, an alkoxy group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms or, when Z represents a carbon atom and R⁶ is ortho to Z, R⁶ and Z taken together may form a fused phenyl group or a saturated or partially unsaturated cyclic ring having from 4 to 7 carbon atoms;~~

~~Z represents a carbon atom or a nitrogen atom;~~

~~R² represents a hydrogen atom or a hydroxy group or R² forms a covalent bond with ring A;~~

~~R³ represents a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms;~~

~~A represents a substituted or unsubstituted cycloalkylene group having from 3 to 8 carbon atoms, or an heterocyclic group having from 4 to 8 atoms which consists of at least one carbon atom and from 1 to 2 nitrogen atoms wherein the substituent is at least one group selected from alkyl groups having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms or oxo groups;~~

~~X represents a covalent bond, an alkylene group having from 1 to 3 carbon atoms, an alkenylene group having from 2 to 3 carbon atoms, a heteroalkylene group having from 2 to 3 atoms, wherein one of said atoms is replaced by a sulfur atom, an oxygen atom, imino, imino substituted with an alkyl group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms or a sulfonyl group, a cycloalkylene group having from 3 to 10 carbon atoms or a~~

heterocyclic group having from 4 to 10 atoms;

R⁴ represents an aryl group having from 6 to 10 carbon atoms, a heteroaryl group having from 5 to 10 atoms;

said alkylene groups, alkenylene groups, heteroalkylene groups, cycloalkylene groups and heterocyclic groups are unsubstituted or are substituted by at least one substituent selected from the group consisting of substituents α ;

said aryl groups having from 6 to 10 carbon atoms and said heteroaryl groups having from 5 to 10 atoms are unsubstituted or are substituted by at least one substituent selected from the group consisting of substituents β ;

said substituents α are selected from the group consisting of alkyl groups having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, cyano groups, alkanoylamino groups having from 1 to 7 carbon atoms, oxo groups or aryl groups having from 6 to 10 carbon atoms defined above;

said substituents β are selected from the group consisting of halogen atoms, alkyl groups having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, alkoxy groups having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, haloalkyl groups having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, alkylthio groups having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, alkanoyl groups having from 1 to 7 carbon atoms, hydroxy groups, cyano groups, aryl groups having from 6 to 10 carbon atoms defined above or heteroaryl groups having from 5 to 10 atoms defined above;

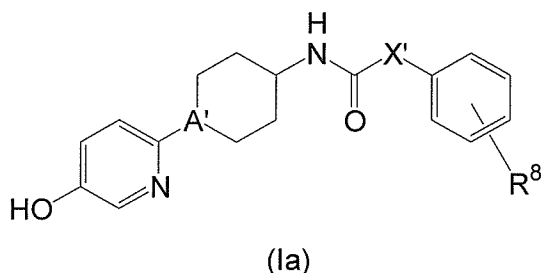
with the proviso that said aryl groups having from 6 to 10 carbon atoms and said heteroaryl groups having from 5 to 10 atoms in said substituents α and β are not substituted by an aryl group having from 6 to 10 carbon atoms or heteroaryl groups having from 5 to 10 atoms;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable ester of such compound;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Canceled)
5. (Canceled)

6. (Original) A compound according to Claim 1, wherein A represents a cyclohexyl group, a cyclohexenyl group or a piperidinyl group.
7. (Original) A compound according to Claim 1, wherein A represents a cyclohexyl group.
8. (Currently amended) A compound according to Claim 1, wherein X represents an alkylene group having from 1 to 3 carbon atoms, a heteroalkylene group having from 2 to 3 atoms, wherein one of said atoms is replaced by a sulfur atom or an oxygen atom.
9. (Original) A compound according to Claim 1, wherein X represents an alkylene group having from 1 to 3 carbon atoms or a heteroalkylene group having from 2 to 3 atoms, wherein one of said atoms is replaced by a sulfur atom.
10. (Original) A compound of formula (Ia)



wherein

A' represents CH, C(OH), or N;

X' represents ethylene, oxymethylene, methyleneoxy, or methylenethio; and

R⁸ represents one or two groups independently selected from hydrogen atoms, alkyl groups having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms and halogen atoms or a pharmaceutically acceptable ester of such compound;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

11. (Original) A compound according to Claim 1, wherein R⁴ represents a phenyl group, optionally substituted by at least one substituent selected from the group consisting of halogen atoms or alkyl groups having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms.
12. (Previously presented) A compound according to Claim 1 selected from:

N-[*cis*-4-Hydroxy-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]-3-phenylpropanamide hydrochloride;
3-(4-Chlorophenyl)-*N*-[*cis*-4-hydroxy-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl] propanamide;
N-[*cis*-4-Hydroxy-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]-*N*-methyl-3-phenylpropanamide;
N-[*trans*-4-(5-Hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]-3-phenylpropanamide hydrochloride;
N-[*trans*-4-(5-Hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]-*N*-methyl-3-phenylpropanamide hydrochloride;
3-(2,4-dichlorophenyl)-*N*-[*cis*-4-hydroxy-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]propanamide;
N-[*cis*-4-hydroxy-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]-3-(4-methylphenyl)propanamide;
3-(2-fluorophenyl)-*N*-[*cis*-4-hydroxy-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]propanamide;
3-(2-fluorophenyl)-*N*-[*trans*-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]propanamide;
3-(4-fluorophenyl)-*N*-[*trans*-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]propanamide;
N-[*trans*-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]-2-(phenylthio)acetamide;
3-(4-ethylphenyl)-*N*-[*trans*-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]propanamide;
3-(2-chlorophenyl)-*N*-[*trans*-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]propanamide;
3-(4-chlorophenyl)-*N*-[*trans*-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]propanamide;
3-(4-methylphenyl)-*N*-[*trans*-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]propanamide;
3-(2-fluorophenyl)-*N*-[*cis*-4-hydroxy-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]-*N*-methylpropanamide;
N-[4-(5-Hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohex-3-en-1-yl]-3-phenylpropanamide;
2-fluorobenzyl;
[*cis*-4-hydroxy-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]methylcarbamate;
benzyl [*cis*-4-hydroxy-4-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)cyclohexyl]methylcarbamate;
3-(2-fluorophenyl)-*N*-[1-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)piperidin-4-yl]propanamide; and
N-[1-(5-hydroxypyridin-2-yl)piperidin-4-yl]-3-(4-methylphenyl)propanamide;
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

13. (Previously Presented) A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of pain, in a mammalian subject, which comprises a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable ester of such compound, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and a suitable pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

14. (Withdrawn) A method for the treatment of disease conditions caused by overactivation of NMDA NR2B receptor, in a mammalian subject, which comprises administering to said subject a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable ester of such compound, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.
15. (Previously Presented) A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of pain, in a mammalian subject, which comprises a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 10, or a pharmaceutically acceptable ester of such compound, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and a suitable pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.
16. (Previously presented) A pharmaceutical composition, which comprises a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable ester of such compound, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and a suitable pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.